Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Report on measures to promote the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

Report submitted by Tunisia

In accordance with the provisions of the final document of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held in 2000 (NPT/CONF.2000/28) requesting all States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapons States, the States of the Middle East and other interested States, to report through the United Nations Secretariat to the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee meetings to be held in advance of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on the steps that they have taken to promote the achievement of such a nuclear-weapons-free zone and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, the Government of Tunisia has the honour to transmit the following information:

Tunisia has always manifested its commitment to the principles of disarmament in general and nuclear disarmament in particular. It considers that nuclear-weapons-free zones play an important role in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and bringing about the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Reflecting that stance:

- Tunisia acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on 26 February 1970.
- Tunisia signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 24 February 1989 and ratified it on 12 February 1990. Negotiations concerning the signing of an additional protocol to the agreement are in progress.
- It signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996. The procedures for ratification are in progress.

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- It signed the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty) and in that regard welcomes the fact that the Antarctic Treaty and the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Bangkok, along with the Pelindaba Treaty, are helping to free the Southern Hemisphere and adjacent areas from the presence of nuclear weapons. In that regard, it also welcomes the steps taken towards the conclusion of new treaties creating nuclear-weapons-free zones.

- Tunisia is one of the sponsors of the resolution submitted every year to the General Assembly by Egypt on behalf of the Arab Group of States on the risks of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

- Every year in the General Assembly it supports the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

- At the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, Tunisia played an active role in the Working Group on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which adopted a report by consensus encouraging, among things, the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East.

In view of the importance of stability in the region of the Middle East for international peace and security, Tunisia remains concerned about the lack of progress in establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East and in implementing the provisions of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which was an integral part of the decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Although all other countries in the region, without exception, are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Israel, the possessor of nuclear weapons, is the only country that refuses to accede to the Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities unconditionally under full-scope IAEA safeguards. The position taken by Israel is an obstacle to disarmament efforts in general and to the establishment of lasting peace in the region and is reflected in the excessive militarization pursued by Israel, which also possesses other weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, it is the responsibility of all States parties to the Treaty and especially the nuclear powers to fulfil their commitments to realize the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the provisions of the final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.